

2nd Battery Minnesota

# PATRIOTS IN DISGUISE

Women Warriors  
of the Civil War

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see you?" " Another time Cashier had climbed a tall tree to put back a Union flag that had been shot down by the enemy. "Al did all the regular duties," Ives recalled. "Not knowing that she was a girl, I assigned her to picket duty and to carry water just as all the men did."

The doctors and nurses at Watertown took special care of Hodgers. She died there on October 10, 1915 at age 71. The Saunemin post of the Grand Army of the Republic arranged for her burial with full military honors, wearing her Union uniform, and she was buried in a flag-draped casket. The inscription on her tombstone in Saunemin Cemetery reads: ALBERT D. J. CASHIER, CO. G, 95 ILL. INF.

At the time of her death, "Albert Cashier's" pension payments had built up to about five hundred dollars in savings, which amply covered funeral and burial costs, leaving almost three hundred dollars in her estate. Within two months after her death, members of an Irish family named Rooney, some resident in the United States, filed claims in county court to be heirs to the estate. In the papers they claimed to be nieces and nephews of Jennie Hodgers. Michael Rooney, in Dundalk, Ireland, maintained that Jennie Hodgers was his mother's half-sister. The claims apparently could not be validated, and in 1914 the estate was turned over to the county treasurer.

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Another female campaigner was temporarily "exposed" late in 1862 in Tennessee. At the end of December, Union General William S. Rosecrans opposed Confederate General Braxton Bragg in the contest for Tennessee. The two armies clashed on December 31st at Stone's River, near Murfreesboro, in a bloody conflict that dragged on for three days. The result was essentially a stalemate, but Bragg retreated and Rosecrans, holding the field, declared it a Union victory. When the smoke cleared, the casualties were staggering. The Union army had 1,730 dead and 7,802 wounded (with another 3,717 missing). The Confederate army had 1,294 dead and 7,945 wounded (with 1,027 missing). These numbers are only about 10 percent less than the casualties at Antietam, which is called the "bloodiest single day in the Civil War."

At the conclusion of the battle, a severely wounded soldier by the name of "Frank Martin," with the 2nd East Tennessee Cavalry

Regiment (Union), was found to be a woman, and she was mustered out, notwithstanding her "entreating earnestly with tears in her eyes to be continued in service." Her real name apparently was Frances Hook. Frances was one of a number of female soldiers who, when their sex was detected (or they feared it would be), migrated from regiment to regiment.

After recuperating from her wound, Frances reenlisted in the 8th Michigan Infantry (known as the "Wandering Regiment") where she was serving in 1863. At Louisville, Kentucky, that spring, the 25th Michigan Infantry was serving provost and guard duty. One day a captain, accompanied by a young soldier of about 17, arrived in charge of some Confederate prisoners. The engaging youth attracted the attention of the post commander "by his intelligence and sprightly appearance." He was detailed for garrison duty with the 25th Michigan, and soon became popular and liked by all. His name was "Frank Martin."

Before long "the startling secret was disclosed, and whispering went thick and fast, the young soldier was a lady; the fact was reported and established by a soldier who was raised in the same town with her [Alleghany City, Pennsylvania] and knew her parents." Confronted by the truth, "Frank" refused to give her proper name and begged to be allowed to stay in service, saying that she had already served for ten months. She was allowed to continue on duty in the hospital. She said that she had been born in New Bristol, Connecticut, raised in Pennsylvania, and sent to a convent in Wheeling, West Virginia, at age twelve, where she remained until the outbreak of the war. She then left the convent and enlisted in the East Tennessee Cavalry.

The 25th Michigan regimental history records that, "Frank was quite small, a beautiful figure, auburn hair, large blue eyes beaming with brightness and intelligence; her complexion naturally very fair, though bronzed by exposure. She was exceedingly pretty and very amiable. She was very patriotic and determined to see the war out." When the 25th left Louisville to join General W. T. Sherman's forces in the Atlanta campaign the following spring, "Frank" remained behind. That was the last that members of the regiment knew or heard about her. She is also reported to have served in the 90th Illinois Infantry Regiment later in the war.

Another female combatant who was wounded at Stone's River was Mrs. Frances Louisa Clayton, who had enlisted in a Minnesota regiment as a private to be with her husband. While serving in



Tunder General William S. Rosecrans, the regiment was at Stone's River. During a charge on the enemy, her husband was hit and killed instantly barely five paces in front of her in the rank. "She charged over his body with the rear line, and shot the rebels with the bayonet," according to a newspaper account but was soon struck with a ball in the hip, and conveyed to a hospital, where her sex was of course discovered." To add to her injury, after she was discharged on January 2, 1863, while on a train between Nashville and Louisville it was attacked by a band of thieves, who robbed her of her money and papers.

According to the newspaper, "While in the army, the better to disguise her sex, she learned to drink, smoke, chew and swear with the best of the soldiers. She stood guard, went on picket duty in rain and storm, and fought on the field with the rest, and was considered a good fighting man." She was described as a masculine looking woman, bronzed by exposure to the sun.

One of the most perplexing cases of long-term service is that of Miss Bridget Deavers (sometimes given as Deaver or Divers, among several other names). Her story so far has defied historical research, and even certain what unit she served in, though she usually is identified with the 1st Michigan Cavalry Regiment. Deavers is sometimes described as a "laundress" or as a *vivandiere*, and sometimes as a "self-soldier heroine." Perhaps there was more than one "Bridget" (or "Biddy") and their stories have melded into one. The existence of at least one Bridget is reported in numerous literary sources as having been in the field during the 1864–1865 campaigns in Virginia.

Reported by the Michigan Civil War Centennial Observance Commission from 1963, titled *Michigan Women in the Civil War*, it was said that Deavers was said to have gone to war with her husband and there was no one of the same name in any Michigan regiment. No evidence of her residence in Michigan can be found. No references to her are included in an encyclopedia (as "Deven"), in Mary Livermore's memoirs (as "Devens"), and in a report of the United States Sanitary Commission (as "Devan"). In this confusion, there is strong documentation of her existence and activities.

A pseudonym story has "Irish Biddy" at the Battle of Fair Oaks (Pines) during McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, May 31–June 1, 1862. She appears on the scene in a critical moment, sup-

porting her wounded husband ("who had a ball through his leg") and urging the 7th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment to charge the enemy and revenge him. Her urgings to "go in, boys, and bate the bloody spalpeens, and revinge me husband" supposedly had an electric effect, and the 7th joined the 10th Massachusetts and other troops in a successful charge on the enemy. The only trouble with this story is that the 1st Michigan Cavalry was not at the battle of Fair Oaks (though the 7th and 10th Massachusetts Regiments were).

The most detailed information about Deavers comes from the 1864–1865 campaigns in Virginia, in which the 1st Michigan Cavalry was active. Various diaries and letters from that period sketch an intriguing portrait of her. Mrs. Charlotte E. McKay, a prominent Civil War nurse who kept a detailed hospital diary, noted in her entry for March 28, 1865 at City Point, Virginia:

Visited, in company with Miss Bridget Deavers, two large camps of dismounted cavalymen lying along the James River. . . . Bridget—or as the men call her, Biddy—has probably seen more of hardship and danger than any other woman during the war. She has been with the cavalry all the time, going out with them on their cavalry raids—always ready to succor the wounded on the field—often getting men off who, but for her, would be left to die, and, fearless of shell or bullet, among the last to leave.

Protected by officers and respected by privates, with her little sunburnt face, she makes her home in the saddle or the shelter-tent; often, indeed, sleeping in the open air without a tent, and by her courage and devotion "winning golden opinions from all sorts of people." She is an Irish woman, has been in the country sixteen years, and is now twenty-six years of age.

McKay then recounts the following exchange of dialogue with Bridget:

"Where is the nice little horse you had with you at the hospital last summer [1864], Bridget?"

"Oh, Moseby captured that from me. He came in while I was asleep on the ground, and took my horse and orderly. I jumped up and ran away."

She and Bridget visited a camp containing men just returned from General Phil Sheridan's last raid in the Shenandoah Valley.

We found them lying under their shelter-tents or sitting on the ground in front of them, boiling coffee over their camp-fires and



*Reb*, about common soldiers of the Confederacy, mentions Loreta Janeta Velazquez and her story of being wounded.

Wiley's body count is far too low; in fact, we will never know how many women took their secret with them to their battlefield graves. More than one female soldier reported observing burials of soldiers in male attire that they knew to be female. One such secret was accidentally uncovered 72 years after the burial.

On February 8, 1934, Mancel Miligan was working in his garden on the outskirts of Shiloh National Battlefield Park. When his hoe began turning up what appeared to be human bones, he notified authorities and nine human skeletons were excavated. Pieces of uniform and buttons, in addition to other military gear, allowed identification of them as Union soldiers who had been buried immediately after the battle of Shiloh in April, 1862. The burial site apparently had been overlooked by grave registration units in the confusion of hasty burials. One of the skeletons was that of a woman whose remains were found next to a minie ball that apparently had killed her. The nine bodies were reburied in the National Cemetery, leaving the mystery of her identity and why she was dressed in uniform.

A cavalry soldier in Company B of the 2nd Indiana was discovered to be a woman after 21 months of service, only after being wounded twice. A soldier writing home to his wife noted: "Maybe she would have remained undiscovered for a long time, if she hadn't fainted. She was given a warm bath which gave the secret away." (See Chapter 2.)

After the battle of Gettysburg on July 2-3, 1863, two Confederate female casualties were discovered:

A woman and her husband were found dead at the so-called "high water mark" on the hillside after Pickett's charge on July 3rd. The woman had been noticed because of her young and innocent face, and was thought to be a boy who was being protected by the man. As the Confederates attempted to breach the Union breastworks at the crest of the hill, a flagbearer was shot down. The youth was seen to raise the flag and carry on briefly, before falling in turn under the withering fire, along with the man. They were buried together on the battlefield.

A wounded Union soldier in hospital at Chester, Pennsylvania, wrote home that a Confederate female soldier, who had lost a leg at Gettysburg, was in hospital with them. He found this "romantic" and felt sympathy for her.

As noted in Chapter 2, Mrs. Frances Clayton served with her husband in a Minnesota regiment in Tennessee for nearly a year. She served all duties that the men did in all kinds of weather, including hand-to-hand combat, and was wounded in action. Her husband was killed in the battle of Stone's River, Tennessee. (December 31, 1862 through January 2, 1863).

Other instances of female casualties have been reported in previous chapters. For additional examples, see the "Honor Roll" in Appendix A.)

### *Exposed by Her Uncle*

One young female soldier was able to fool everyone else, but not her own uncle. The story was reported in a Kentucky newspaper, taken from the New Albany, Indiana *Ledger*:

A FEMALE VOLUNTEER Quite a commotion was created in the Camp of the 66th [Indiana] yesterday afternoon by the discovery of a female volunteer in Capt. Gerard's company. The young lady was among the first to volunteer in the company. She is a resident near Six-Mile Switch, on the Louisville, New Albany, and Chicago Railroad, [and] came into the city some four weeks since, dressed in men's clothes, and volunteered. She conducted herself in the most proper manner after her enlistment, and her sex was never even suspected.

Yesterday her uncle was on a visit to Camp Noble, where he accidentally met and recognized her. She immediately burst into tears on being discovered. She was discharged by Commandant Martin, and, dressed in her soldier clothes, immediately left for home. She belongs to a highly respectable family and we are requested to suppress her name. What induced her to volunteer no one knows.

### *Real Soldiers Don't Have Babies*

Forget mannerisms. If you are pretending to be a male soldier, having a baby definitely will give you away.

John V. Hadley, an Indiana soldier, wrote home to his girlfriend on April 19, 1863, that the "lady soldier" he had previously referred to in the Army of the Potomac had been sent home to her parents after having a baby. A fund had been established in the army to give her boy a military education, and he was inclined to contribute to it. It seems that a line soldier had suddenly given birth to a baby. Apparently her lover had enlisted in a New Jersey



IN, Mrs. Frances Louisa (w). Enlisted in a Minnesota regiment to be with d. She was wounded and her husband killed in the battle of Stone's River, see.

IS, Sarah. Wisconsin soldier, enlisted with brother but detected by her risms and sent home.

ON, Lizzie (Elizabeth) (w). 125th Michigan Cavalry. When wounded and ected, claimed to have enlisted at 14 and served eighteen months in seven nt regiments, "leaving one and enrolling in another when fearing detec-

Lucy Ann. *Vivandiere* for 13th Virginia Regiment.

Frances (k). (Sergeant "Frank Mayne") served in 126th Pennsylvania Infan- ater mortally wounded in a battle while serving with a different regiment in estern theater.

IG, Mrs. L. L. daughter of regiment, 10th Michigan Infantry.

IRS (DIVERS/DEVAN), Bridget. Served in 1864-1865 Virginia campaigns, al- y with 1st Michigan Cavalry.

NDS, Sarah Emma ("Franklin Thompson"). Served for two years in 2nd gan Infantry as soldier, spy, and nurse.

RIDGE, Anna. Served as daughter of the regiment with 2nd Michigan Infantry my of Potomac, and later with 3rd and 5th Michigan regiments, for a total ee years.

NK, Hannah. Served as daughter of the regiment with the 7th Wisconsin try.

ORIDGE, Ellen (w). Served with boyfriend James Hendrick in an early Wis- n regiment. Went on skirmishes and raids, and was wounded in action.

; Nancy. Virginia. Served as guide for Jackson's cavalry. Once captured, ed by shooting captor.

RY, Margaret. Captured by Federals near end of war with another female er in Confederate uniform, and imprisoned at Nashville.

DALE, Jane. Regimental nurse in 2nd Michigan Infantry. Enlisted with hus- l Hiram H. Taken prisoner after 1st Bull run while helping the wounded and hing for missing husband. Escaped and took information on Confederate ements to authorities in Washington, D.C.

YGERS, Jennie ("Albert Cashier"). 95th Illinois Infantry. Only woman known ave served complete three-year term of enlistment disguised as man, main- ing male disguise well after the war.

YK, Frances (w). ("Frank Martin"). Served in 90th Illinois, 2nd East Tennessee lary, 8th Michigan. Joined a new regiment each time discovered in previous . Once taken prisoner.

KINS, Mary Owen. Served in 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry.

ES, Annie. Alleged consort of Custer and other officers in D.C. area camps. l to have served as scout and spy.

IES, Lizzie. Served as daughter of the regiment in 6th Massachusetts Infantry.

BY, Mrs. William. Husband and son in Confederate army. She smuggled weap- through Federal lines at Baton Rouge, Louisiana; caught, convicted as spy, risoned on Ship Island. Died there near end of war. Son killed at Gettysburg, band survived.

LYBRIDGE, Annie (w). Detroit. Served in 21st Michigan Infantry. After Battle Pea Ridge found shot in arm, taken to Hospital in Louisville. Swapped dis- urge with Joseph Henderson to reenlist.

MARCUM, Julia. Female soldier from Kentucky. (No other details known. Source: Ida Tarbell letter in National Archives.)

MCCREARY, Mary (Mrs.). Served as private with husband in Company H, 21st Ohio, but after several months "found herself in a delicate condition," obtained leave from the colonel, went home, and never returned.

MILLER, Charley. Served in 18th New York Regiment as "drummer boy" using name "Edward O. Hamilton." Preferred to live as male since childhood.

MOORE, Madeline. Joined army to be with boyfriend, was elected lieutenant and served in West Virginia under General George B. McClellan, and later at Bull Run.

MURPHY, Mary Ann. Served as "Samuel Hill" in Company B, 53rd Massachusetts, with brother Tom.

NILES, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Fought in Civil War beside her husband in 4th New Jersey. Died October 4, 1920 at age 92.

OWEN(s), Mary (w). From Huntingdon (or Montour) County, Pennsylvania. Served eighteen months, fought in three battles and wounded twice. When she returned home she claimed to have been married to the man with whom she had enlisted. He was killed and she wounded in same battle.

PETERMAN, Georgianne. From Ellenboro, served two years as a "drummer boy" with 7th Wisconsin.

PETERSON, Belle. Young country girl who lived near Ellenboro. Enlisted in a Wisconsin regiment probably late in 1862 and "served in the army for some time."

PHILIPS, Bettie Taylor (Mrs. W. D.). When with her husband in 4th Kentucky Infantry (Confederate), cared for wounded on battlefield, part of famous "Orphan Brigade." Arrested, held as spy at Nashville.

REYNOLDS, Mrs. Belle. Served with her husband, a lieutenant in 17th Illinois Infantry. Traveled with regiment, saw combat while under fire at Shiloh.

ROONEY, Rose (Mrs.). Served with 15th Louisiana Infantry. Braved battlefield shot and shell in order to care for the wounded. Later a hospital matron in New Orleans for soldiers' home.

SEABERRY, Mary Y. From Columbus, Ohio, served in Company F, 52nd Ohio as "Charles Freeman" until "sexual incompatibility" was admitted, November 10, 1862.

SMITH, Mary. Enlisted in 41st Ohio Infantry, McClellan *Zouaves*, to avenge death of only brother at Bull Run. At Camp Wood, Ohio, found out to be a woman by her mannerisms.

SULLIVAN, Betsy (Mrs.). Battlefield nurse with Company K, 1st Tennessee Infan- try (Confederate). Served with husband, John Sullivan, and shared the hardships of army life with the regiment.

TAYLOR, Sarah. Served as daughter of the regiment with the 1st Tennessee Regi- ment.

TEBE, Marie (w). "French Mary" served in 27th Pennsylvania Infantry ("Wash- ington Brigade") which was at 1st Bull Run, and the 114th Pennsylvania Infantry as *vivandiere*. Frequently under fire as battlefield nurse, wounded in action, awarded medal for gallantry.

THOMPSON, Ellen P. L. Served in 139th Illinois Infantry Regiment.

THOMPSON, Lucy Matilda (w). ("Bill Thompson"). At 49, followed her husband, Bryant Gauss, into the Bladen Light Infantry (Bladen County, North Carolina), 18th North Carolina Regiment. Wounded at 1st (or 2nd) Bull Run and again